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Faith and Trust

A glimpse into the devious world of espionage was provided during the past week when Rep. William G. Bray, Hoosier Republican, spoke out in vigorous defense of the Central Intelligence Agency.

It is fair to say that the people in this part of Indiana trust Bill Bray. He has been elected to Congress repeatedly as a Republican from normally Democratic areas. What he has to say will be accepted largely on a basis of his reputation for good faith in dealing with affairs of government.

What makes the situation unusual is that Rep. Bray's trustworthiness is necessary to explain to the people the shadowy function of an organization that deals in the untrustworthy. Bray praised the CIA for doing an excellent job, even though it cannot be revealed. He said the intelligence agency is not an autonomous body, but an arm of government that is responsible to the President, and to Congress. Frequent briefings by CIA officials keep appropriate congressional committees informed of daily developments.

Bray said that the American people "would be very proud" of the CIA

if they could know the job it does.

The Hoosier congressman pointed up the difficulty of his position, and the position of the people in an open society. He said that the nature of CIA activities "requires considerable secrecy. Those of us who know the facts would like to speak up in its defense, but for the most part that is impractical."

He goes on to discuss the Communist attempt to "spread lies about the United States and to win the cold war by the basest kind of deceit and treachery." The CIA apparently has to move into this arena.

Bray is not a spokesman for secrecy in government, and his record of effective service has been established over a period of years. There is no reason to question his support of the CIA.

In the circumstance, this seems to be the most the American people can expect to learn about a giant arm of their government. It is not a comforting experience, and hopefully both citizens and congressmen can look for the day when the CIA may be opened for public inspection.